

FORM B – BUILDING

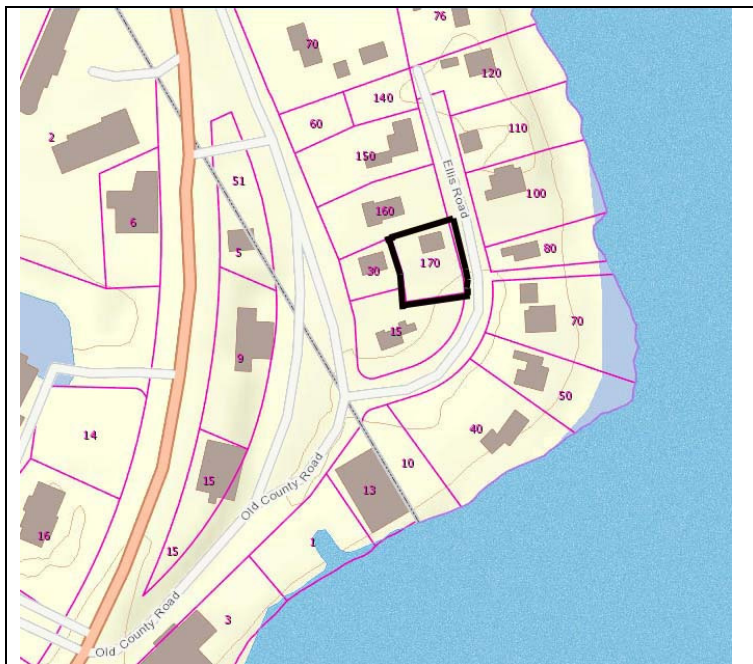
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



View from southeast.

Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Larson Fisher Associates, Inc. with Kathryn Grover

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: April 2013

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

22-3A

ORLEANS

EAS.597

Town/City: Eastham

Place: South Eastham

Address: 170 Ellis Road

Historic Name: Albert L. Stratton House

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: ca. 1935

Source: tax records, censuses

Style/Form: Craftsman/front gable cottage

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: undetermined (probably concrete block)

Wall/Trim: wood shingles/ wood

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: none

Major Alterations (with dates): none

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: .185 acre

Setting: The subject property is located on the west side of Ellis Road within a single family residential subdivision. Commercial land uses are located west of the development, across Old State Highway.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

170 ELLIS ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

This dwelling is one of the older buildings in the Ellis subdivision and retains much of its historic character. It is a one-story, wood frame, front gable house with a shed-roofed dormer on its left (south) side. Also on the left (south) side is a faceted bay window. The house has a cellar. A porch extends across two-thirds of the front facade; it has a shed roof and was likely altered from being a screened porch to a three-season porch with the current glazing in place.¹ There is also a small rear entrance porch. The front attic window has been replaced, but an original six-over-one double hung sash located to the left of the porch on the first floor is still intact. The building is clad with the weathered wood shingles and white painted trim ubiquitous throughout Cape Cod.

A number of mature evergreen shrubs hug the house and there are other mature deciduous shrubs and trees on the property. An unpaved parking area and driveway south of the house, with access on Ellis Rd. is at a lower grade than that of the house.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The house at 170 Ellis Road was built about 1935 by Albert L. Stratton on a lot he acquired from Gilbert E. Ellis of Brewster in 1933. The house occupies lot 17 of a twenty-seven-lot subdivision platted by Gilbert E. Ellis of Brewster in April 1925. Ellis was a farmer, realtor, and owner of a shore net and pound fishery and was born in Brewster in 1867; his father, Thaddeus, was a fisherman, and his mother, Caroline J. Norway, was born in Spain. Ellis began his career as a store clerk when he was fourteen, if not younger. At the time of his marriage in 1887 he worked as a salesman. The 1900 census shows Ellis as a fisherman; the 1910 census shows him more specifically as a weir fisherman. He was among a declining number of Cape fishermen in what was termed the "shore net and pound fishery," which used large nets attached to a wood framework extending from the shore outward to catch such inshore schooling fish as herring and menhaden; these were sold as bait to the offshore fishing industry, and other species caught in the nets were sold to urban fresh-fish markets after rail lines reached the Cape in the 1870s. In 1914 the town of Brewster granted Ellis a permit to build six fish pounds in its coastal waters, and by 1920 Ellis was one of three Brewster men who ran a pound fishery; he employed seven men, among the most of any of the 43 pound fisheries in the state, and caught \$3100 of fish.²

Once a prosperous industry on Cape Cod, the pound fishery began to decline after World War I, and by 1920 Ellis was probably preparing to leave the industry. The 1920 census shows him as a farmer, and by 1929 he is listed as a realtor. In September 1924 he bought four acres in South Eastham bordered mostly by the state highway, Town Cove, and what was, for a brief time, a canal that connected Town Cove to the river at Boat Meadow on Cape Cod Bay, a distance of less than a mile.³ Ellis acquired the tract from New York City insurance broker Frederick Dorflinger Suydam, whose father, William Farrington Suydam, was an affluent Pennsylvania silk manufacturer and a summer resident of Orleans. The tract was part of the far larger holdings of Captain Heman Smith and his wife Louisiana Crosby Smith, who lived at 70 Old State Highway (EAS.43). In 1881, five years after the Smiths were lost at sea in the wreck of the bark *Burnside*, their children sold the property to their sibling Francis M. Smith (1852-1922), who in 1898 sold it to Somerville carpenter George S. Newcomb, an Orleans native. In 1913 Newcomb's son, George E. Newcomb, sold the four-acre tract to Albert F. Sherman, superintendent of the quarantine station on Gallup's Island in Boston Harbor, and in 1916 Sherman and his wife sold it to Frederick Suydam's mother, Mary Elizabeth Dorflinger Suydam.⁴

By January 1926 Ellis had built a house—what is now 76 Old State Highway—on the northernmost 1.5 acres of the tract, and in January 1933 he sold lot 17 to Albert Stratton with the proviso that no house be closer than ten feet to the lot's boundaries and that a septic tank be installed. Stratton appears to have built the cottage at 170 Ellis by 1936, for the 1940 census lists him as one of only two residents on Ellis Road and states that he had lived in the "same house" five years earlier. Stratton was a hotel, meat market, and liquor store clerk from Gardner, Massachusetts. Born in 1866, his parents were Albert Osmon Stratton and Eliza Ellen Watson, and in his early career he worked for his father in his various businesses. In 1888 he clerked at his father's meat market, in 1899 he was clerk at his father's South Gardner Hotel, and in 1905 he was a clerk at his father's bakery and restaurant in Gardner. Stratton married Leominster shirtmaker Christine B. Fairbanks in 1893, but the 1910 census no longer shows her living with her husband; no death record has been located for her in Massachusetts. By 1910 Stratton had become a

¹ No building permit records have been found for this work.

² On the pound fishery, see Matthew McKenzie, *Clearing the Coastline: The Nineteenth-Century Ecological & Cultural Transformation of Cape Cod* (Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 2010), especially 11-12, 33, 91, 96, 138-39, 164, 172; *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Harbor and Land Commissioners For the Year 1914* (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1915), 100; and "Returns from the Shore Net and Pound Fisheries for the Year 1920," *Annual Report of the Division of Fisheries and Game for the Year Ending November 30, 1920* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1921), 151-58.

³ Alice A. Lowe, comp., *Nauset on Cape Cod: A History of Eastham*, 4th ed. (Eastham, MA: Eastham Historical Society, 1968), 35-36, states that the canal was dug in 1804 through "land following very nearly the boundary line between the towns of Eastham and Orleans" and became known as "Jeremiah's Gutter" where it crossed the property of Jeremiah Smith. A shallow channel, the canal filled quickly, and in 1817 the Eastham and Orleans Canal Proprietors built a wider one, but it was abandoned at some unstated later date.

⁴ William H. Smith, Boston; Mary M. Smith and Nellie J. Smith, all formerly of Eastham, to Francis M. Smith, 1 November 1881, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds (BCD) 148:366; Francis M. Smith, Somerville, to George S. Newcomb, 5 November 1898, BCD 296:12; George S. Newcomb to George E. Newcomb, 28 May 1909, BCD 296:105; George E. Newcomb to Albert F. Sherman, Boston, 6 January 1913, BCD 321:21; Albert F. and Emma L. Sherman to Mary E. Suydam, Montclair NJ, 15 August 1916, BCD 345:440; Frederick D. Suydam, NYC, to Gilbert E. Ellis, East Brewster, 4 September 1924, BCD 409:454.

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170 ELLIS ROAD

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state game warden. He lived with his father through at least 1920 but lived alone in a three-family house in Gardner in 1930. The 1940 census shows Stratton as single, without occupation, and owning \$1800 in real property. Albert L. Stratton died in 1946, and in the same year his executor sold lot 17 (and part of lot 16, which Stratton bought from Ellis in 1936) to Lewis W. Eldredge, his wife Beryl Moody Eldredge, and his mother-in-law Matilda Moody. The deed does not mention a building on the lot, though 170 Ellis Road was clearly constructed by the time of the sale.

Lewis Eldredge, a hardware salesman who had grown up in Orleans, had lived at 30 Old State Highway, the adjoining 170 Ellis Road to the west, since 1930. That house was located on lot 26 of the Ellis subdivision. Eldredge bought lot 15 and parts of lot 16 and 27 from Ellis in 1937. Tax records for 1947 show that Eldredge owned a house on his "homestead lot" and the former Stratton House at 170 Ellis Road. Given his mother-in-law's presence among grantees, it seems likely that he acquired it for her.⁵ She and her husband, George B. Moody, were longtime residents of Arlington, but the 1946 deed lists her as a resident of Eastham.

Born in March 1906 in Brewster, Lewis Winfred Eldredge was the son of Judah and Grace Gould Eldredge. His father was a garage mechanic and by 1930 Lewis was a hardware salesman and living in his parents' Orleans household. He may have acquired his first lot from Ellis in anticipation of his marriage, though marriage date has not been located. By 1931 Eldredge had built a house and garage at 30 Old State Highway and, according to the 1940 census, he had married Gwendolyn Berry Moody about 1935. Born in Boston in 1904, Moody was the daughter of chef George B. Moody and his wife Matilda Stimson, a native of Canada. In 1928 Moody was a teacher in Arlington, where she and her parents had long lived but by 1930 she had moved to Orleans, where she taught and lived in a lodging house. The 1940 census shows Lewis Eldredge on Old King's Highway as a hardware salesman owning \$3000 in real property with his wife Beryl, then thirty-five years old. Tax records for 1954 show Eldredge owning three dwellings—one on his "homestead land" at 30 Old State Highway, one at 170 Ellis Road, and a "cottage" on lot 15, now 15 Ellis Road.

Lewis Eldredge died in June 1984, and his widow was living in one of the Ellis Road houses in 1985. She died in September 1990, and in July 1992 Kenneth R. and Doris T. Eldredge of Orleans and Hollis L. and Dorothy P. Eldredge of Brewster sold their interest in 170 Ellis Road and 30 Old State Highway to Peter J. and Susan Kavanaugh of East Orleans and Kurt W. Kavanaugh, then living at 50 Ellis Road. Peter J. Kavanaugh is the current owner of 170 Ellis Road.

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⁵ Gilbert E. Ellis to Lewis W. Eldredge, July 1930, BCD 476:87; Ellis to Eldredge, August 1937, BCD 529:279. Ellis also sold Eldredge a strip of land along lot 16 in February 1941; see BCD 575:473.

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Atlas of Barnstable County, Massachusetts . . . from Official Plans and Actual Surveys. Boston: Walker Lithograph and Publishing Co., 1905, 1910.

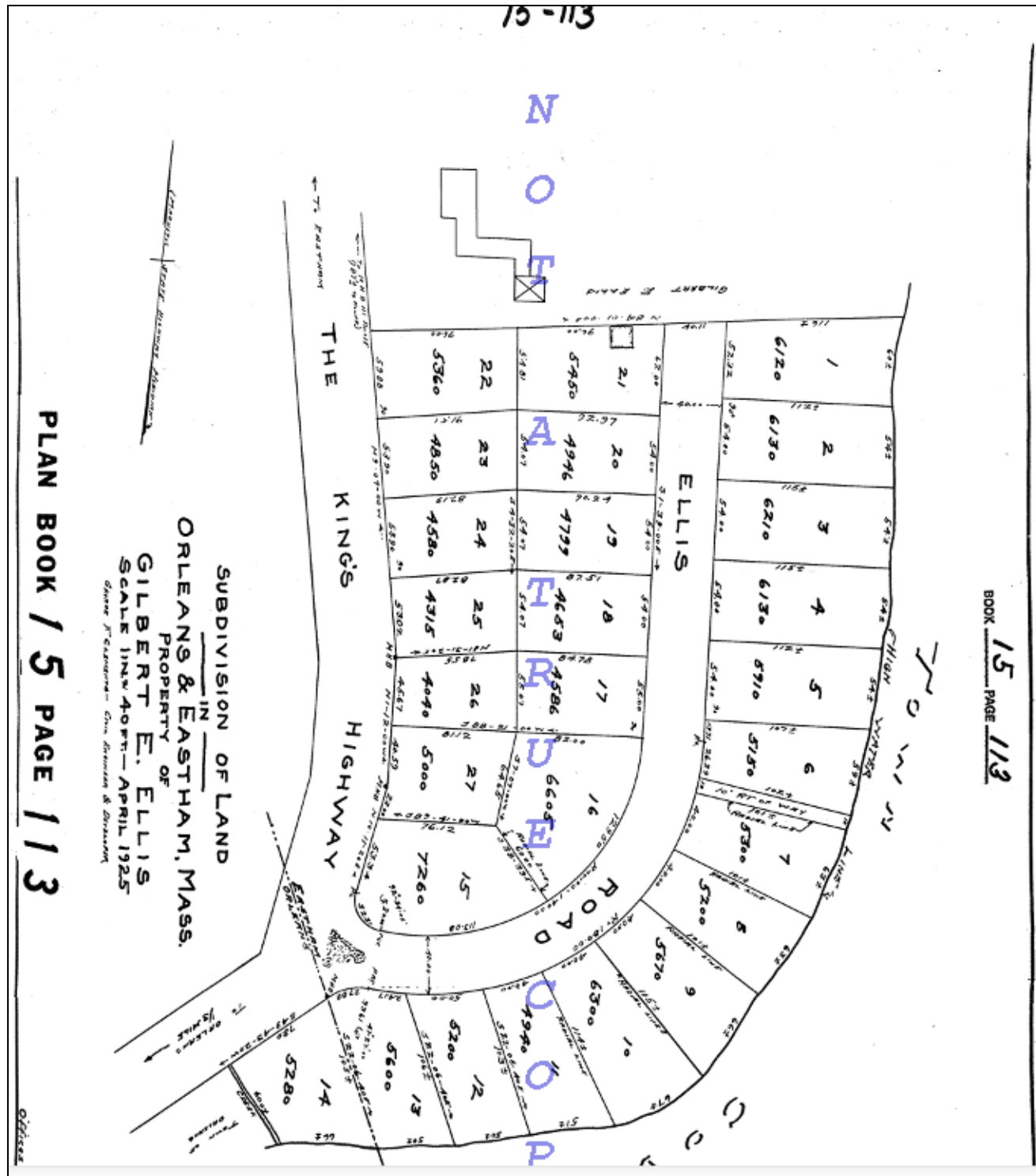
PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2012-2013 unless otherwise noted)



View from east (photo courtesy of Town of Eastham Assessor).

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Ellis subdivision plan of 1925 (BCP 15:113): 170 Ellis Road occupies lot 17.